

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10527

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET US

SUBJ: ANTI-CIA PLACARDS AGAIN EVIDENT DURING EPMG-STAGED SOLIDARITY
RALLY

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 10401, B. ADDIS ABABA 10295

SUMMARY: EPMG STAGED LARGE RALLY MORNING SEPT 26 OF WORKERS
FROM PEASANT AND URBAN DWELLERS ASSOCIATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE SUPPORT
FOR PMAC AND CONDEMNATION OF SEPT 23 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON PMAC
FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM. DESPITE LARGE CROWDS, RALLY

WAS ORDERLY AND PASSED OFF WITHOUT INCIDENT. NUMEROUS PLACARDS
LINKING ANTI-REGIME EPRP WITH CIA WERE EVIDENT. THIS CABLE
RECOMMENDS THAT NEW REPRESENTATIONS BE MADE TO EPMG IN THIS LATTER
REGARD. END SUMMARY

1. AS MEANS OF COUNTERACTING POSSIBLE HARMFUL EFFECTS ON PUBLIC
OPINION OF SEPT 23 AMBUSH AND WOUNDING OF MENGISTU, EPMG MARSHALLED
ITS FAITHFUL LEGIONS OF PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS AND URBAN DWELLERS
ASSOCIATION WORKERS FROM CITY AND NEIGHBORING AREAS TO CONVERGE
ON REVOLUTION SQUARE FOR LARGE SUNDAY MORNING SOLIDARITY RALLY.

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ALTHOUGH STREETS WERE HEAVILY GUARDED BY ARMED TROOPS, FOUR-HOUR

DEMONSTRATION WAS ORDERLY THROUGHOUT, AS MASSES PASSIVELY LISTENED TO HARANGUES OF ORGANIZATION LEADERS TO EFFECT THAT REVOLUTION WOULD GO ON, DESPITE DESPERATION EFFORTS OF ANARCHISTS AND IMPERIALISTS, SUCH AS ATTEMPT ON MENGISTU'S LIFE.

2. LARGE NUMBER OF PLACARDS WERE IN EVIDENCE. MOST OF THESE QUOTED MENGISTU TO EFFECT THAT "REVOLUTIONARIES MAY DIE OR BE KILLED, BUT THE REVOLUTION GOES ON." MORE DISTURBING, HOWEVER, WERE FREQUENT REFERENCES TO ALLEGED CIA INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIAN ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITY. AMONG SUCH PLACARDS, WHICH WERE THEN GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY ON NEWS BROADCASTS THROUGHOUT DAY, WERE THE FOLLOWING: "EPRP IS CIA", "AWAY WITH CIA AGENTS, DESGUISED AS TOURISTS", "YANKES GO HOME", "NO MORE CHILES AND CIA", "PAID CIA AGENTS", "ANARCHISTS DRUNK WITH CIA MONEY". MENGISTU HIMSELF, TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, IN HIS SPEECH ON OCCASION, (OR ANOTHER SEPARATE ADDRESS TO TEACHERS SAME DAY), DID NOT MENTION CIA, MAKING INSTEAD ONLY USUAL REFERENCES TO REACTIONARIES, ANARCHISTS, AND IMPERIALISTS.

3. THIS LATEST OUTBURST OF ANTI-CIA PUBLICITY AFTER WEEK OF QUIET COULD ONLY HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH EPMG APPROVAL (OR AT LEAST ACQUIESCENCE) AND WOULD APPEAR TO NECESSITATE FOLLOW-UP TO CHARGE'S SEPT 20 REPRESENTATION TO FONMIN KIFLE WODAJO ON SUBJECT. IN EMBASSY VIEW, LOGICAL NEXT STEPS WOULD BE TO CALL IN MEKBIB IN WASHINGTON, AND TO REPEAT CHARGE'S DEMARCHE HERE TO ACTING FONMIN GETACHEW KIBRET, DRAWING IN FIRST INSTANCE ON POINTS MADE TO KIFLE (ADDIS ABABA 10295) AND THEN REFERRING TO LATEST INCIDENT. IN LATTER CASE, MEKBIB MAY OBSERVE THAT EPMG NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR "SPONTANEOUS" EXPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT BY PRIVATE GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS. WHETHER HE DOES OR NOT, OUR ARGUMENT SHOULD BE THAT PLACARDS ARE GRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF CHARGE'S CONTENTION TO KIFLE THAT PMAC OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF SEPT 15, WHICH INCORRECTLY LINKED CIA TO ACTIVITIES OF ETHIOPIAN ANTI-REGIME ORGANIZATIONS, CAN ONLY SERVE TO HAVE HARMFUL EFFECT UPON PUBLIC OPINION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD USG AND ITS REPRESENTATIVES IN ETHIOPIA. HENCE, IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT SOME MEANS BE FOUND, SUCH AS DISAVOWAL, TO COUNTERACT HARMFUL IMPRESSIONS CREATED BY PMAC STATEMENTS.

4. IN ABSENCE OF SOME REASSURANCES BY EPMG ON THIS ISSUE IN INTERIM,
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EMB ALSO BELIEVES THAT TOPIC SHOULD BE RAISED AGAIN WITH KIFLE IF AND WHEN HE HAS OCCASION TO MEET WITH ASST SECY SCHAUFLE OR OTHER HIGHBRANKING DEPT OFFICIAL DURING HIS PRESENT STAY IN NEW YORK.

5. NEXT POTENTIAL TROUBLE DATE WILL BE TUES, SEPT 28 WHEN SCHOOLS REOPEN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EPMG IS ANTICIPATING POSSIBILITY OF ANTI-EPMG EPRG-INSPIRED DEMONSTRATIONS AND/OR VIOLENCE. SECURITY FORCES WILL BE CALLED AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE, WITH ORDERS TO

SHOOT TO KILL IF NECESSARY.
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